

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-02 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 SSM-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 IO-13 EUR-12  
MCE-00 /098 W

-----011397 260842Z /14

R 251502Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6570  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

S E C R E T BEIRUT 0453

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR  
SUBJECT: AREA SITUATION AND SOUTH LEBANON

1. CALLED ON FONMIN BOUTROS MORNING JAN. 25 TO HAVE EXCHANGE  
ON CURRENT SITUATION. TOLD HIM WE CONTINUE TO HOPE FOR  
PROGRESS ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND NOW THAT  
PRINCIPAL PARTICIPANTS HAD DELIVERED THEMSELVES OF THEIR  
FRANK OPINIONS WE BELIEVED IT WAS TIME FOR QUIET DIPLOMACY.  
BOUTROS SAID HE WAS VERY CONCERNED BY CONFRONTATION DEVELOP-  
ING IN AREA BETWEEN RADICALS AND MODERATES, A CONFRONTATION  
WHICH HE THOUGHT WAS BEING AGGRAVATED BY COURSE OF THE  
NEGOTIATIONS.

2. WE DISCUSSED BOUMEDIENE'S VISIT TO AREA AND SOVIET ROLE.  
I SAID WE HAD HEARD TWO VERSIONS OF WHAT BOUMEDIENE HAD BEEN  
SAYING IN CONVERSATIONS IN ARAB CAPITALS. ONE WAS THAT HE  
HAD SAID RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN IRAQ AND SYRIA SHOULD  
BE FIRST PRIORITY AND THAT ALL SHOULD CONCENTRATE THEIR

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EFFORTS TO BRING DOWN SADAT. SECOND VERSION WAS THAT HE HAD  
SAID IRAQI-SYRIAN RAPPROCHEMENT WAS FIRST PRIORITY AND  
ALL SHOULD BE PREPARED TO WELCOME SADAT BACK INTO FOLD  
IF HE CHANGED HIS MIND. BOUTROS SAID HE WAS AFRAID FIRST  
WAS A MORE ACCURATE REFLECTION OF WHAT BOUMEDIENE HAD SAID.  
HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE IF SADAT RECANTED  
TOTALLY FOR HIM TO COME BACK INTO THE FOLD, BUT EVEN THAT

WAS NOT CERTAIN. THE SYRIANS WERE VERY MUCH OPPOSED TO EVERYTHING SADAT WAS DOING.

3. WE ALSO TALKED ABOUT QUESTION OF SOUTH LEBANON AND ARMS THROUGH THE PORT OF TYRE. I TOLD BOUTROS WE UNDERSTOOD THAT ISRAELIS HAD LIFTED BLOCKADE OF TYRE BECAUSE THEY DID NOT WANT TO PRECIPITATE INCIDENTS WHICH MIGHT INTERFERE WITH DISCUSSIONS OF PEACE. BOUTROS SAID THAT DID NOT MAKE MUCH SENSE. WHY HAD THEY INSTITUTED BLOCKADE IN FIRST PLACE? WAS IT TO PROTECT ISRAEL OR LEBANON? IF IT WAS THE FORMER, WHICH HE ASSUMED TO BE THE CASE, WHY WERE THEY NOW LETTING PALESTINIANS ARM THEMSELVES SO HEAVILY? HIS CONCLUSION WAS THAT THEY WERE IN AGREEMENT WITH EGYPTIANS ON GIVING PALESTINIANS BETTER POTENTIAL TO RESIST SYRIANS. PALESTINIANS DID NOT LIKE SYRIANS AND VICE-VERSA. SOONER OR LATER THERE WAS GOING TO BE ANOTHER FIGHT BETWEEN THEM. EGYPT AND ISRAEL WANTED THE PALESTINIANS TO BE ABLE TO GIVE SYRIANS A HARD TIME. I SAID I FOUND THAT HARD TO BELIEVE. THE ISRAELIS HAD NO INTEREST IN INCREASING PALESTINIAN ARMS STRENGTH, NOR FOR THAT MATTER DID THE EGYPTIANS.

4. BOUTROS THEN TOOK UP THEME OF ISRAELI INTENTIONS TOWARD SOUTH LEBANON IN GENERAL AND SAID HE WAS AFRAID ISRAELIS MIGHT TRY TO SETTLE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AT LEBANON'S EXPENSE BY PERMITTING THEM TO CARVE OUT THEIR OWN LITTLE  
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STATE IN SOUTH LEBANON. I SAID ISRAEL DID NOT WANT AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE ON THEIR BORDER. BOUTROS REPLIED THIS STATE WOULD BE SMALL AND WOULD HAVE PREDOMINANTLY CHRISTIAN LEBANON TO NORTH OF IT AND COULD BE KEPT UNDER CONTROL. IT WOULD BE A CHEAP PRICE FOR A SETTLEMENT.

5. BOUTROS ASKED ME WHAT INFORMATION WE COULD GIVE ON QUANTITIES OF SOVIET ARMS GOING INTO SYRIA AND ARMS COMING THROUGH TYRE TO PALESTINIANS. I SAID WE HAD LITTLE PRECISE INFORMATION ON SOVIET ARMS COMING INTO SYRIA BUT HAD BEEN INFORMED MAGNITUDE OF SHIPMENTS WAS GREATLY EXAGGERATED BY RUMORS AND ARMS IN QUESTION WERE COMING FROM LIBYA RATHER THAN THE SOVIET UNION. WITH REGARD TO TYRE WE HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION FROM LOCAL SOURCES WHICH ARE PROBABLY THE SAME AS HIS. I COULD NOT OFFHAND GIVE HIM ANY ESTIMATES ON FIGURES BUT WOULD SEE WHAT WE COULD DEVELOP.

6. COMMENT: I REPORT THE ABOVE AS ILLUSTRATING BOUTROS' PRESENT STATE OF MIND, WHICH REFLECTS CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES IN GENERAL.  
PARKER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PEPR, PINT, PGOV, LE  
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